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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/769,076	01/25/2001	Michael D. Krysiak	P/35-4	7143

7590 09/16/2003

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EXAMINER

VALENTI, ANDREA M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3643

DATE MAILED: 09/16/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/769,076	KRYSIAK ET AL.	
	Examiner Andrea M. Valenti	Art Unit 3643	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address. --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
 - Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 March 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-53 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-25,36,37,39-42,45,46,48,49,51 and 53 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 26-30,32,38,47,50 and 52 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). 18
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6) Other:

Interview Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/769,076	KRYSIAK ET AL.
	Examiner Andrea M. Valenti	Art Unit 3643

All participants (applicant, applicant's representative, PTO personnel):

(1) Andrea M. Valenti.

(3) _____.

(2) Philip Weiss.

(4) _____.

Date of Interview: 09 September 2003.

Type: a) Telephonic b) Video Conference
c) Personal [copy given to: 1) applicant 2) applicant's representative]

Exhibit shown or demonstration conducted: d) Yes e) No.

If Yes, brief description: _____.

Claim(s) discussed: 32.

Identification of prior art discussed: U.S. Patent No. 4,126,417 and U.S. Patent No. 6,324,781.

Agreement with respect to the claims f) was reached. g) was not reached. h) N/A.

Substance of Interview including description of the general nature of what was agreed to if an agreement was reached, or any other comments: Applicant brought to examiner's attention that claim 32 was not addressed in the previous office action. Furthermore, applicant indicated that the kit of Edward's could not be applied to mulch products. Examiner indicated that it is not the teaching of the kit of Edward's that is being used to modify the teachings, but merely the accepted wisdom in the field of coloring fertilizers, etc for safety.

(A fuller description, if necessary, and a copy of the amendments which the examiner agreed would render the claims allowable, if available, must be attached. Also, where no copy of the amendments that would render the claims allowable is available, a summary thereof must be attached.)

THE FORMAL WRITTEN REPLY TO THE LAST OFFICE ACTION MUST INCLUDE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW. (See MPEP Section 713.04). If a reply to the last Office action has already been filed, APPLICANT IS GIVEN ONE MONTH FROM THIS INTERVIEW DATE, OR THE MAILING DATE OF THIS INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM, WHICHEVER IS LATER, TO FILE A STATEMENT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW. See Summary of Record of Interview requirements on reverse side or on attached sheet.

Examiner Note: You must sign this form unless it is an Attachment to a signed Office action.


Examiner's signature, if required

Summary of Record of Interview Requirements

Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP), Section 713.04, Substance of Interview Must be Made of Record

A complete written statement as to the substance of any face-to-face, video conference, or telephone interview with regard to an application must be made of record in the application whether or not an agreement with the examiner was reached at the interview.

Title 37 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1.133 Interviews

Paragraph (b)

In every instance where reconsideration is requested in view of an interview with an examiner, a complete written statement of the reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action must be filed by the applicant. An interview does not remove the necessity for reply to Office action as specified in §§ 1.111, 1.135. (35 U.S.C. 132)

37 CFR §1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent or Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.

The action of the Patent and Trademark Office cannot be based exclusively on the written record in the Office if that record is itself incomplete through the failure to record the substance of interviews.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or the attorney or agent to make the substance of an interview of record in the application file, unless the examiner indicates he or she will do so. It is the examiner's responsibility to see that such a record is made and to correct material inaccuracies which bear directly on the question of patentability.

Examiners must complete an Interview Summary Form for each interview held where a matter of substance has been discussed during the interview by checking the appropriate boxes and filling in the blanks. Discussions regarding only procedural matters, directed solely to restriction requirements for which interview recordation is otherwise provided for in Section 812.01 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, or pointing out typographical errors or unreadable script in Office actions or the like, are excluded from the interview recordation procedures below. Where the substance of an interview is completely recorded in an Examiners Amendment, no separate Interview Summary Record is required.

The Interview Summary Form shall be given an appropriate Paper No., placed in the right hand portion of the file, and listed on the "Contents" section of the file wrapper. In a personal interview, a duplicate of the Form is given to the applicant (or attorney or agent) at the conclusion of the interview. In the case of a telephone or video-conference interview, the copy is mailed to the applicant's correspondence address either with or prior to the next official communication. If additional correspondence from the examiner is not likely before an allowance or if other circumstances dictate, the Form should be mailed promptly after the interview rather than with the next official communication.

The Form provides for recordation of the following information:

- Application Number (Series Code and Serial Number)
- Name of applicant
- Name of examiner
- Date of interview
- Type of interview (telephonic, video-conference, or personal)
- Name of participant(s) (applicant, attorney or agent, examiner, other PTO personnel, etc.)
- An indication whether or not an exhibit was shown or a demonstration conducted
- An identification of the specific prior art discussed
- An indication whether an agreement was reached and if so, a description of the general nature of the agreement (may be by attachment of a copy of amendments or claims agreed as being allowable). Note: Agreement as to allowability is tentative and does not restrict further action by the examiner to the contrary.
- The signature of the examiner who conducted the interview (if Form is not an attachment to a signed Office action)

It is desirable that the examiner orally remind the applicant of his or her obligation to record the substance of the interview of each case. It should be noted, however, that the Interview Summary Form will not normally be considered a complete and proper recordation of the interview unless it includes, or is supplemented by the applicant or the examiner to include, all of the applicable items required below concerning the substance of the interview.

A complete and proper recordation of the substance of any interview should include at least the following applicable items:

- 1) A brief description of the nature of any exhibit shown or any demonstration conducted,
- 2) an identification of the claims discussed,
- 3) an identification of the specific prior art discussed,
- 4) an identification of the principal proposed amendments of a substantive nature discussed, unless these are already described on the Interview Summary Form completed by the Examiner,
- 5) a brief identification of the general thrust of the principal arguments presented to the examiner,
(The identification of arguments need not be lengthy or elaborate. A verbatim or highly detailed description of the arguments is not required. The identification of the arguments is sufficient if the general nature or thrust of the principal arguments made to the examiner can be understood in the context of the application file. Of course, the applicant may desire to emphasize and fully describe those arguments which he or she feels were or might be persuasive to the examiner.)
- 6) a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed, and
- 7) if appropriate, the general results or outcome of the interview unless already described in the Interview Summary Form completed by the examiner.

Examiners are expected to carefully review the applicant's record of the substance of an interview. If the record is not complete and accurate, the examiner will give the applicant an extendable one month time period to correct the record.

Examiner to Check for Accuracy

If the claims are allowable for other reasons of record, the examiner should send a letter setting forth the examiner's version of the statement attributed to him or her. If the record is complete and accurate, the examiner should place the indication, "Interview Record OK" on the paper recording the substance of the interview along with the date and the examiner's initials.

DETAILED ACTION

Per the telephone interview with applicant's representative, Philip Weiss, on 9 September 2003, the previous non-final office action (paper no. 17) is substituted by the following office action (paper no. 18) since claim 32 was not addressed in the previous office action.

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of group III, claims 26-30, 32, 38, 50, 52, and 47) in Paper No. 16 is acknowledged.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description:

1.) None of the reference signs were mentioned in the specification.

Correction is required.

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the mulch must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s), none of the figure flow charts nor the Brief Description of Drawings section of the specification identify mulch. No new matter should be entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 26-30, 38, 50, and 52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,324,781 to Stevens in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,126,417 to Edwards.

Regarding Claim 26 and 50, Stevens teaches a colored mulch product (Stevens abstract and Col. 6 line 35) consisting essentially of a material comprising a fiber cellulose, clay, loam, sand and/or combination; a binding agent; a dye and/or pigment;

Stevens does not explicitly teach that the dye indicates to a user environmental conditions of soil where the mulch is placed and the color fades or disappears in response to a lack of nutrient or fertilizer in the mulch. However, Stevens teaches that the mulch product contains fertilizer (Stevens Col. 4 line 50 and abstract) and Edwards teaches that it is old and notoriously well-known in the art to color fertilizer (Edwards Col. 4 line 12). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Stevens with the teachings of Edwards for the reasons set forth by Edwards (Edwards Col. 1 line 27-28). This modification inherently teaches that the mulch color changes as the fertilizer, which is one component of the overall mulch product, penetrates the soil since the color of the fertilizer fades indicating a lack of nutrient in the mulch.

Regarding Claim 27, Stevens as modified teaches nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium fortifiers (Stevens abstract last line).

Regarding Claims 28-30, Stevens as modified teaches the dye inherently indicates to the user the acidity of the soil; dye indicates to a user the moisture content of the soil; the chemical content of the soil.

Regarding Claim 38, Stevens as modified teaches the mulch is the same or similar color of an actual plant, flower, fruit, or vegetable of a seed planted to the mulch (Stevens Col. 6 line 37).

Regarding Claim 52, Stevens as modified inherently teaches a method for adjusting the chemical content of soil by placing a colored mulch on top of the soil (Stevens abstract); changing colors of the mulch based on condition of the soil; adding chemicals to the soil based on the color of the mulch (Edwards teaches that additional nutrients are required when previous applications have been depleted Col. 4 line 55-58).

Claim 32 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,324,781 to Stevens as applied to claim 26 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,734,167 to Skelty.

Regarding Claim 32, Stevens as modified is silent on the dye is fluorescent. However, Skelty teaches it is old and notoriously well-known to dye agricultural products with fluorescent dye (Skelty Col. 1 line 35-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings at the time of the invention to enable safe night time agricultural operations as taught by Skelty (Skelty Col. 1 line 1-26).

Claim 47 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,324,781 to Stevens

Regarding Claim 47, Stevens teaches a colored mulch product comprising a material of a fiber, cellulose, clay, loam, or sand and/or a combination of the same; a binding agent; and a dye and/or pigment (Stevens abstract), but is silent on the colored mulch product produced by an agglomeration operation. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings at the time of the invention since the modification is merely an engineering design choice of selected an alternate equivalent old and well-known means of manufacturing that is notoriously well-known for use in manufacturing fertilizers and is commonly used for application of a binding and coloring agent to an object. One of ordinary skill in the art would modify the teachings with this known equipment for an efficient means of manufacturing the fertilizer and for thoroughly coating the cellulosic material with binding agent and dye.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 26-30, 32, 38, 47, 50, and 52 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

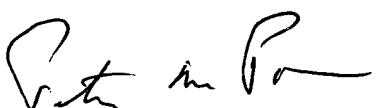
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrea M. Valenti whose telephone number is 703-305-3010. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30am-5pm M-F; Alternating Fridays Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter M. Poon can be reached on 703-308-2574. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-306-4195 for regular communications and 703-305-0285 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-4357.

AMV
September 9, 2003



PETER M. POON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600